

DISPOSABLE LID FOR BEVERAGE CUPS OR CONTAINERS

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Field of the Invention

The invention generally relates to a lid for a beverage cup or other container, and more particularly to a disposable lid having defined depressed areas for containing foodstuff.

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Background of the Invention

Finger foods, such as french fries, chicken nuggets, and onion rings, are often ordered "to go" and consumed while driving in an automobile or while walking. Many of the above foods are frequently eaten with condiments such as ketchup, mustard, and
15 barbeque sauce. Since these foods are often eaten with one's fingers, a person typically holds a food item in his fingers and dips it into a condiment. When eating in a sit-down restaurant, the condiment may be dispensed directly next to or on top of the food product, or a tub of the condiment can be placed on a table next to the consumer. When
20 consuming such products in an automobile or while walking, however, the option of using a tub of condiment becomes more complex and represents some danger to safety because it is difficult to manage multiple separate containers in those situations. Thus, the process of consuming such foods while on the go represents an inconvenience and a potential safety hazard.

Several devices have been used to relieve the inconvenience of eating finger
25 foods while on the go. However, these devices fail to provide an adequate solution to the inconvenience because they require a restaurant or vendor to provide additional attachments and containers beyond what is typically given to a consumer when a meal is ordered "to go."

Summary of the Invention

The present invention is directed to a disposable lid for closing and covering the open end of a beverage cup or other container. One exemplary embodiment of the disposable lid of the present invention includes a top surface for covering the open end of a beverage cup or other container, a side surface extending downwardly from the top surface, and a lip engaging portion defined by a top and outer wall. The lip-engaging portion securely attaches the disposable lid to the beverage cup or other container. The top surface of the disposable lid preferably includes at least one depressed area formed therein, and preferably a plurality of depressed areas. The depressed areas are configured to have a depth sufficient for holding condiments and other small foodstuff.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a top plan view of the disposable lid having defined depressed areas for containing foodstuff in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2 is a sectional view of the disposable lid along line 2—2 of Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a sectional view of the disposable lid along line 3—3 of Figure 1.

Figure 4 is a perspective view of the disposable lid of Figure 1.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment

The present invention is more particularly described in the following examples that are intended as illustrative only since numerous modifications and variations therein will be apparent to those skilled in the art. As used in the specification and in the claims, “a,” “an,” or “the” can mean one or more, depending upon the context in which it is used. The preferred embodiment is now described with reference to the figures, in which like numbers indicate like parts throughout the figures.

Referring to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout, Figures 1-4 illustrate a disposable lid **10** for covering and closing the open end of a beverage cup or other container that may contain either a hot or cold beverage or a foodstuff.

5 The disposable lid **10** includes a generally planar top surface **12**, a side surface **14** extending downwardly from the top surface **12**, and a top wall **16** and outer wall **18** extending around the outer periphery of the disposable lid **10**. As illustrated in Figures 2-4, the side surface **14** and the outer wall **18**, which are spaced apart from one another, are joined together by the top wall **16**. The outer wall **18** is flared outwardly at its
10 bottom end as indicated in Figures 2-4.

 The disposable lid **10** further includes a lip-engaging portion **20** defined by the top wall **16** and the outer wall **18**. The lip-engaging portion **20** is formed substantially around the periphery of the disposable lid **10** and receives the open end of a beverage cup to assure that the disposable lid **10** is securely attached to the beverage cup or
15 container. Preferably, the lip-engaging portion **20** is located in a plane that is below a plane in which the top surface **14** lies.

 The top surface **12** of the disposable lid **10**, which covers the open end of a beverage cup, includes depressed areas **22** and **24** formed therein. The depressed areas **22** and **24** are formed to accommodate small foodstuff including, but not limited to,
20 condiments such as ketchup, mustard, and barbeque sauce. In a preferred embodiment, each of the depressed areas **22** and **24** is defined by a side wall **26** extending downwardly from the top surface **12** and a bottom wall **28** located in a plane that is parallel to a plane in which the top surface **12** lies, as illustrated in Figures 2 and 3. The bottom wall **28** is spaced significantly downward from the top surface **12** to receive and
25 contain condiments or other small foodstuff. Therefore, the depressed areas **22** and **23** have a depth sufficient for accommodating condiments or other small foodstuff. The depressed areas **22** and **24** may be of any shape appropriate for receiving and containing small foodstuff.

 As best shown in Figure 1, the top surface **12** also includes a straw-receiving
30 opening **30** formed by a perforation that may be punctured by a conventional drinking

straw to gain access to the beverage without detaching the beverage cup from the disposable lid. Further, the top surface **12** may comprise an advertising portion **32** for including the logo or trademark of a business utilizing the disposable lid **10** as well as a plurality of beverage designating markers **34** for indicating which type beverage is included within the beverage cup. Figure 1 illustrates one embodiment of how the depressed areas **22** and **24**, the straw-receiving opening **30**, the advertising portion **32**, and the beverage designating markers **34** may be positioned and arranged on the top surface **12**. One skilled in the art will appreciate, however, that a variety of positions and arrangements of the depressed areas **22** and **24**, the straw-receiving opening **30**, the advertising and the beverage-designating markers **34** may be made on the top surface **12** without departing from the scope of the invention.

In another embodiment, the lid as described herein, may be affixed to a non-beverage container. As one skilled in the art will appreciate, such a container can be used to hold any foods or liquids.

The disposable lid **10** is preferably made by thermoforming a flat sheet of plastic under appropriate temperatures and pressures. The flat sheet of plastic is extruded, and while still hot, is conveyed into a pressure molding station where the sheet of plastic is pressure molded using male and female dies, in a known manner.

The above specification, examples and data provide a complete description of the manufacture and use of the composition of the invention. Other features and amendments to the structure of the disposable lid of the present invention may be utilized, as may be well know to those skilled in the art, without departing from the spirit and scope of the accompanying claims.